

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IS, JO, PFOR
SUBJECT: EX-HEBRON MAYOR JA'ABARI MEETS PERES, WILL MEET RABIN

1. IN THE WAKE OF THE RECENT FLURRY OF STATEMENTS TOUCHING
ON THE FUTURE OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES (SADAT-HUSSEIN
STATEMENT AT ASWAN; ASAD'S TIME INTERVIEW; SADAT'S WASHING-
TON POST INTERVIEW; NOT TO MENTION THE MANY VARIETIES OF
ISRAELI ELECTION YEAR POSTURINGS), THE ISRAELI PUBLIC HAS
NOW WITNESSED A MEETING JANUARY 23 BETWEEN DEFENSE MINISTER
PERES AND THE PRO-HASHEMITE FORMER MAYOR OF HEBRON, SHEIKH
ALI JA'ABARI. ISRAEL TV SHOWED FOOTAGE OF THE TWO MEN
EMERGING FROM THEIR SESSION SMILING AND EMBRACING, WHERE-
UPON PERES STATED THAT ISRAEL HAS NO INTENTION OF ANNEXING
THE WEST BANK, AND THAT TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS REMAIN OPEN
TO AN OVERALL PEACE NEGOTIATION WITH JORDAN. JA'ABARI
SAID THAT HIS IMPRESSION WAS THAT KING HUSSEIN HAS
NOT GIVEN UP HIS INTEREST IN THE WEST BANK, AND WOULD
NOT DO SO IN THE FUTURE; NOR WOULD THERE BE A FULL RE-
CONCILIATION BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE PLO, EVEN IF KING
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HUSSEIN MET WITH ARAFAT. NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF THE
PERES-JA'ABARI MEETING COVER THE SAME GROUND, ADDING
THAT NO DETAILS OF THE SESSION ARE BEING RELEASED AND
THAT JA'ABARI WILL ALSO MEET WITH PRIME MINISTER RABIN
ON JANUARY 26.

2. JA'ABARI TOLD KOL ISRAEL JANUARY 22 IN ANSWER TO A

QUESTION ON KING HUSSEIN'S VIEWS ON THE WEST BANK,
"I DON'T SAY ITS AS THE WORDS OF THE KING, BUT I UNDER-
STAND THAT THE OWNER OF THE WEST BANK IS THE COUNTRY
WHICH LEFT IT, WHICH MEANS JORDAN, AS SINAI BELONGS TO
EGYPT AND THE GOLAN HEIGHTS BELING TO SYRIA." (FOR
TEXT SEE FBIS--NC221416Y).THE EX-MAYOR ADDED THAT IF
THERE IS GOING TO BE ANY PALESTINIAN GOVERNMENT, IT MUST
HAVE TERRITORY IN THE WEST BANK OR "PALESTINE." (COMMENT:
AND NOT A GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE.)

3. COMMENT: THE LITTLE WHICH PERES TOLD REPORTERS AFTER
HIS MEETING WITH JA'ABARI CONTAINS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING
REMARKABLE--IN FACT, HE HAD MADE ALMOST EXACTLY THE
SAME COMMENTS A WEEK EARLIER WHEN SPEAKING TO A CON-
VENTION OF JEWISH JOURNALISTS. THE ISRAELIS ARE PLAINLY
MAKING AN EFFORT TO PUFF UP "THE JORDANIAN OPTION" BY
DRAWING CIRCLES AROUND THE KIND OF WEST BANK FIGURES,
LIKE JA'ABARI, WITH WHOM THEY ARE HAPPIEST TO TALK
AND BY IGNORING AND DENOUNCING THE OTHERS (PLO AND
THEIR WEST BANK/GAZA SUPPORTERS). LOUDLY AS THEY
PROCLAIM THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JA'ABARI'S VISIT TO
JORDAN AND HIS ROYAL WELCOME BY KING HUSSEIN, WE
ARE NOT FULLY CONVINCED THAT THEY MEAN IT. A USEFUL
ILLUSTRATION OF THIS MAY BE A COMMENT WHICH ONE OF OUR
MFA CONTACTS (GONNEN, MFA LIAISON OFFICER FOR THE
TERRITORIES) MADE JANUARY 24 ON THE PERES-JA'ABARI
TALKS THAT "THERE IS NOTHING TO ADD TO WHAT MINISTER
PERES SAID." IF WHAT PERES SAID IS INDEED ALL THERE
IS, IT WOULD SEEM THAT MORE QUESTIONS ARE RAISED THAN
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ANSWERED. TO BEGIN WITH, WHY JA'ABARI? WHY
AN 80-YEAR OLD HAS-BEEN WHO COULDN'T EVEN CONTEST HIS
HOMETOWN MAYORAL ELECTION WHEN HIS CHIEF OPPOSITION
WAS DEPORTED?
DUNNIGAN

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